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FM AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6511
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAMAKO 001348

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/24/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PINS](#) [PGOV](#) [ML](#)
SUBJECT: MINISTER KONE REVISES PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION DATE
AND PONDERES RETIREMENT

REF: A. BAMAKO 01113
[1](#)B. BAMAKO 01237

Classified By: Political Officer Aaron Sampson for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d)

1.(C) Summary: The Ministry of Territorial Administration revised the 2007 presidential election date after realizing that the previously announced date of April 15 did not meet constitutional requirements. The first round is now scheduled for Sunday, April 29. A second round of voting will occur on May 12 if necessary. The first round of legislative elections follow on July 1 with a second round on July 22. On November 15 a European adviser detailed to assist Mali with election planning told the Embassy that Minister of Territorial Administration, General Kafougouna Kone, had rebuffed informal efforts to draft him as a presidential candidate should the candidacy of President Amadou Toumani Toure (ATT) suddenly falter. Kone reportedly said he was not interested in the presidency and remains loyal to ATT. End Summary.

Election Dates Revised

2.(U) The GOM revised the date of the 2007 presidential election after noticing that the original date of April 15 was two weeks earlier than permitted by the Malian constitution; the first round of voting will now occur on Sunday, April 29. If necessary, a second round will be held on May 12. It appears that the original decision to schedule the election for April 15 was simply an error originating with the Council of Ministers. Round one of the 2007 legislative elections is now scheduled for July 1 and round two is set for July 22.

Ballot Questions and General Kone

3.(C) General Wilfred Wesch (retired), an elections expert detailed by the German government to assist the Ministry of Territorial Administration with the 2007 elections, told the Embassy on November 15 that Minister Kone, who remains an active Military General, had pledged to stay on as Minister of Territorial Administration through the end of the electoral cycle to manage any "problems" that may occur. Kone has reached (or is about to reach) Mali's mandatory retirement age of 62 and is rumored to be ready to retire both from the government and the military.

4.(C) When asked what sort of "problems" Kone envisioned, Wesch said Kone recently shared with him that several individuals had approached Kone to suggest drafting him for president should the candidacy of ATT suddenly falter during the final months of the presidential campaign. Wesch said Kone described ATT's presidency as largely successful, but

that Malians were generally unhappy with the direction of the country. Kone apparently told Wesch that he had no interest in running for president and would retire after seeing the presidential and legislative elections through.

Comment

5.(C) Others in Bamako have also spoken to the Embassy of a possible movement to draft Kone to replace ATT. Kone is one of the only GOM officials who has managed to keep his uniform clean from allegations of malfeasance throughout several decades of acclaimed military and political service (ref B). He also maintains the respect of the Malian military and security forces, despite serving as ATT's front man for the controversial negotiations with the Tuareg rebels in Kidal. In charge of administering the elections and managing the Algiers Accords process with the Tuaregs, Kone has emerged as one of the most powerful officials in Mali. If Kone were considering a presidential bid, he would be required by the constitution to resign from active military service - or reach the mandatory retirement age of 62 - this month. The Embassy has seen no indications that Kone harbors any presidential ambitions.
McCulley